

## **Delta Working Landscapes**

The Delta Working Landscapes projects are part of the State's Environmental Restoration Program. The projects, a collaboration between the Department of Fish and Game, the Delta Protection Commission and subcontractors Hart Restoration and Ducks Unlimited, plan to improve ecosystem quality, water quality, and levee system integrity.

Both subcontractors have started implementing projects throughout the Delta. These projects include wildlife friendly farm practices and habitat wetland restorations. In accordance with the contract, site visits were made with the Department of Fish and Game, Delta Protection Commission, Ducks Unlimited and Hart Restoration staff to view the progress of the projects.

Hart Restoration is creating vegetated buffers on ditch banks and hedgerow plantings that will improve water quality by reducing runoff of sediment and pesticides before these materials reach Delta rivers and sloughs. Additionally, native grasses, sedges, and other low growing species have been planted along the Elk Slough levee in Clarksburg. The native vegetation will also control erosion, discourage burrowing animal recruitment, lessen the threat of flooding, and create wildlife friendly habitats.

Ducks Unlimited is currently working on creating wetland habitats to attract waterfowl. These habitats will include millet, watergrass, timothy, and smartweed planted along swales and potholes. Ducks Unlimited has started implementing habitat projects at three sites along Whiskey Slough in Stockton.

The Delta Working Landscapes Projects are pilot projects intended to serve as a mechanism for adoption by other farmers on a larger scale throughout the Delta. These projects will result in a Final Report information package and article to be submitted to a science journal and an agricultural journal to ensure delta-wide distribution of the results of the projects. The package will provide information promoting the practice of devoting space to habitat and describe the cost and benefits of such practices in broad terms of intrinsic cultural and ecological value.

The current DWL agreement (\$800,000) between Department of Fish and Game and the Delta Protection Commission has been amended to extend through March 2013, as opposed to the previous ending date of March 2011.